



JOINT ENVIRONMENT UNIT



Global Webinar Series

Environment and Emergencies in the face of COVID-19



Environment and emergencies: What you need to know in a pandemic context?



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Linkages: environment, emergencies and the current pandemic context

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Overview

Compound context: Pandemic and emergency 'new normal'

1	Existing preparedness and contingency planning for environmentally sound emergency response is now likely to be inadequate under compound and cascading crisis conditions – pandemic, lockdown, socio-economic crisis, plus the risk of emergencies under a climate crisis
2	Movement of experts, technology, equipment and relief items to emergencies are severely constrained and, with rising costs, limit capacity to respond in an environmentally sound way
3	Health, humanitarian and economic development roles and responsibilities overlap. Prioritising environmental dimensions is difficult politically and monetarily with accelerating need and more partners and actors
4	In States of Emergency or crisis, laws, roles and responsibilities and social norms change. Leaders and populations must be aware of pandemic and emergency responsibilities and the need to maintain an environmentally responsible response.



https://www.voanews.com/covid-19-pandemic/covid-19-restrictions-hurt-east-africas-fight-against-locusts



1: Compound and cascading impacts

Example: Compound risks and impacts of response for food security in the Horn of Africa

Lockdown conditions	Covid-19 measures have slowed the importation of appropriate pesticides and restricted the training and movement of ground control personnel:
	environmental impacts are hard to quantify
Covid-19 impacts	
	Emerging research indicates that where native biodiversity is high, zoonotic
Insecurity	infection rates are lower. High levels of habitat destruction can increase
mocounty	transmission and unmanaged live animal markets and the illegal wildlife trade
	can lead to virus crossover risks.
Flooding March- May;	
Below-average rainfall	Pesticide management systems are still being put in place in many countries,
warning Oct-Dec	with pesticide storage, monitoring and clean-up systems often strained. The
	impact of current spraying on key species including pollinators such as bees,
Locust rosponso	and earthworms, remains unquantified as yet
Locust response	
	More frequent Indian Ocean cyclones in 2018-19 and high (+400% expected)
Locust infestation	rainfall in Dec 2019 played a key role in this locust plague. Climate change
Locust intestation	impacts on locusts are difficult to quantify but increased risks are likely.



1: Compound and cascading impacts

Example: Disaster waste management

Disaster waste management systems

Current contingency and disaster waste management plans and budgets will likely be inadequate

Recycling initiatives halted during lockdown PPE and training for disaster response personnel needed

Risk of infectious waste within disaster waste due to contaminated face masks, tissues etc.

Risks of trafficking, illegal PPE re-use, and illegal dumping of waste could increase under disaster situations

difficult to do during lockdown

Scaling up waste

management in

emergency response is

Emergency waste technology is often less environmentally sound and more harmful

Local debris clearing and clean-ups, including through CFW schemes, may not be safe if there is a risk of hazardous waste within disaster waste

Medical waste management systems

Household waste management systems

CUMULATIVE STRESS ON SYSTEMS, TECHNOLOGY & CAPACITY

2: Constrained movement, rising costs

Example: Afghanistan humanitarian response during Covid-19



- The HRP requests \$1.1 billion to reach 11.1 million people until the end of 2020. In July it is only 22% funded
- Some 12.4 million people are in acute food insecurity, 4 million of whom are in 'emergency' levels (IPC 4), but Covid-19 impacts mean flour has risen 13% in price
- 227 incidents impacting humanitarian access were recorded as "opportunistic" in the second quarter of 2020



3: Maintaining Environmental Priorities

Example: Sphere Thematic Sheet 1: Do no harm

- 1. The environment impacts a humanitarian response
 - a. A degraded environment can trigger or worsen a humanitarian crisis.
 - b. A healthy environment will allow for effective humanitarian response.

2. Humanitarian response affects the environment

- a. It can damage the environment further
- b. It can improve environmental conditions and reduce future damage and the risk of future crises



4: State of emergency

Example: New pandemic structures and responding under them

UN has

Topics

COVID-19 lockdown precipitates deforestation across Asia and South America

BY JAMES FAIR ON 3 JULY 2020 Mongabay Series: Global Forests, Mekong Illegal Logging

https://www without-pen

Summary

Compound context: Pandemic and emergency 'new normal'

1	Preparedness and contingency planning is likely to be inadequate under compound and cascading crisis conditions
2	Movement of experts, technology, equipment and relief items and rising costs limit capacity to respond in an environmentally sound way
3	Maintaining the prioritisation of environmental dimensions is difficult politically and monetarily
4	Roles, responsibilities and social norms have changed, but we must remain committed to environmental and climate agreements, responsibilities and laws to reduce current and future risks







<u>https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/E-9-2020-002543_EN.html</u>

- FAO, Fighting the Locusts Safely: pesticides in desert locust control: balancing risks against benefits
- Locust swarms and climate change, <u>https://www.unenvironment.org/news-and-stories/story/locust-swarms-and-climate-change</u>
- <u>https://www.nature.com/articles/srep14830;</u>
- https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2019.2736
- <u>https://royalsocietypublishing.org/doi/10.1098/rspb.2019.2736</u>
- <u>https://spherestandards.org/wp-content/uploads/Sphere-thematic-sheet-environment-EN.pdf</u>
- https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-humanitarian-response-plan-covid-19-april-december-2020-ghrp-july-update-enar

Thank you

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https://www.economist.com/international/2020/06/22/covid-19-has-led-to-a-pardemic-of-pla c-pollution